

## CHILD EVANGELISM FELLOWSHIP REVISITED

Updated June 10, 2003 (first published August 26 1996) (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

We do not support Child Evangelism Fellowship's ministry on a number of points. I am sure there are many fine and sincere Christians involved with CEF and that they have a genuine Christian love for the eternal welfare of children. I praise the Lord for every child who has heard the Gospel because of their efforts. We are instructed, though, to measure everything by the Word of God. God's work is to be done in God's way. Not only are we told to preach the Gospel, we are told HOW to preach the Gospel. The Bible says, "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2 Timothy 2:5). To please the Lord, not only must we preach the Gospel, but we also must do all things according to the Word of God.

I will mention some of the areas of concern we have in regard to CEF.

ONE, CEF IS NOT A MINISTRY OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, and we believe, therefore, that it does not have the authority to carry on such a ministry. Furthermore, there does not appear to be any requirement that their teachers are members of a sound church. According to the pamphlet entitled "Questions and Answers about the Ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship," CEF Volunteer Teachers, for instance, are required to be born again and must sign the CEF Statement of Faith, but there is no requirement that they even be church members. This is strictly contrary to the pattern that was given to us by the Apostles in the New Testament Scriptures. It is the church that is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

TWO, CEF USES AND PROMOTES THE MODERN VERSIONS, which we believe are corrupted. Scripture quotations in the CEF magazine *Evangelizing Today's Child* are from the New International Version.

THREE, CEF HAS MOVED IN THE DIRECTION OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT IN RECENT DECADES. The following is from *Sedition in Missions* by Michael D. McCubbins:

“Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) in the United States was invaded and taken over by Pentecostals quite a few years ago. In 1988 there was a major split in CEF with twenty-two of their chapters leaving and calling themselves Child Evangelism Fellowship Conservative. As a result of the objections of CEF, the new group changed their name to Child Evangelism Ministries, and in 1991 to Gospel Ministries to Children. The conservative element left CEF because of disagreements with the leadership.

“The conservatives believed in the Security of the Believer, and the leadership did not. The conservatives were against the Charismatic movement, but the leadership was Charismatic. The

conservatives believed that their workers should be members of local churches, and the leadership did not. The conservatives held to salvation by faith, while the leadership had shifted to lordship salvation. The conservatives were opposed to ties being created with the National Council of Churches and Billy Graham.

“This same situation had occurred much earlier in Paraguay. Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) is known in Paraguay as Liga Paraguay a pro Evangelismo de Niños (LIPEN). When the national churches were trying to discontinue cooperation with CEF, many missionaries were pressuring them to continue” (Michael D. McCubbins, *Sedition in Missions*, 1996, p. 16, Bethel Baptist Bookstore, 754 East Rockhill Road, Sellersville, PA 18960).

FOUR, CEF IS ECUMENICAL AND DOES NOT PRACTICE BIBLICAL SEPARATION. It works with congregations which are members of the liberal National Council. It works with churches that practice infant baptism and other heresies. When I inquired of their position a few years ago, they sent me a packet of literature. It contained no warning for God's people to separate from apostasy and compromise. Their Statement of Faith urges every believer to “rise above all sectarian prejudices and denominational bigotry.” This is a slanderous way to describe denominational divisions. While some denominational divisions ARE based on sectarian prejudice and bigotry, most of them are based on DOCTRINE. Speaking generally, for example, what is the difference between a Baptist church and an Episcopal Church? Doctrine. A Baptist church and an Episcopal church have different doctrines pertaining to baptism, priesthood, sacraments, the church, prophecy, and many other things. The same is true for a Baptist church and an Assemblies of God church, a Baptist church and a Lutheran church, etc.

Some complain that doctrine divides, but according to the Bible, doctrine is SUPPOSED to divide. Timothy was instructed to allow NO OTHER DOCTRINE in the Church at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3). The Christian's job is to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). What part of the faith? ALL of it! That requires that the believer is obligated to mark and avoid doctrine that he believes to be contrary to the once-delivered faith (Romans 16:17-18).

The Lord's "Great Commission" requires three things: the preaching of the Gospel, the baptism of those who believe, and the disciplining of those who believe. Jesus said that those who believe are to be taught "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). This involves teaching the whole counsel of New Testament truth. This is impossible apart from a sound church. If children are saved and then turned over to unsound churches, they will be trained improperly. They will not be taught to observe all things which the Lord has commanded. Does anyone really think that this is a light matter which the Lord Himself will overlook? We think not. Parachurch evangelistic ministries which turn their converts over to ecumenical and doctrinally unsound churches are responsible before God for the spiritual corruption which results.

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